



Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on new home, steering efforts outside city limits



Jeffrey Brown, a worker from Cook Foundation and Flatwork, carries a form for foundation walls at a new Habitat for Humanity build at 404 E. Golf Ave. in the Vandercook Lake area on Monday, Sept. 30, 2013. A new Habitat for Humanity build is underway at 404 E. Golf Ave. near the Vandercook Lake area on Monday, Sept. 30, 2013. (J. Scott Park | MLive.com)

By **Lisa Satayut** | Lsatayut@mlive.com on September 30, 2013

SUMMIT TWP., MI – Right now it's just a huge hole in the ground. But, in a matter of months it will become the new home of a low-income working class family in Jackson. Crews broke ground on a **Habitat for Humanity** home located at 404 E. Golf Ave in the Vandercook Lake area recently. While most Habitat homes have been constructed in the city, Greater Jackson Habitat for Humanity officials saw a need for a change this time around.

This is the first time "in a long time" the organization has stepped outside the city of Jackson, said Leanne Prout, Habitat spokeswoman. "We support a greater Jackson; for a while we were only focusing on houses in the city and not in the townships," Prout said. The organization also has plans to build a home in Leoni Township on Hall Avenue. So far a homeowner has not been chosen to own the Golf Avenue location. But once they are, homeowners are required to put a little sweat equity into the new home as it is constructed as well as work at the Habitat Restore. "We're hoping to choose a homeowner next month. They are required to work at least 25 hours in the restore and between 300 and 500 hours on the house," Prout said. "It's truly a life lesson as they also learn how to do minor repairs or install siding." The organization builds anywhere between one and two homes a year and receives about 20 to 25 housing applications. Those who apply must meet certain requirements and also have a job.

"It's not a free home but it's a zero percent mortgage and a small down payment," Prout said adding that they partner with the Community Action Agency. Andy Cook, the president of Cook Foundation and Flatwork, has sub-contracted with Habitat for 15 years. He was at the site preparing it for the foundation. "It's nice that the homeowners are required to be a part of the building process," Cook said as he stood in a 32-foot by 45-foot hole where the house will be built. "Habitat's been a good organization for the community." At this point, Prout does not know what the house will look like when it's finished but said it will have "multiple" bedrooms.

After numerous delays, the Habitat home on Harris Street is almost complete.

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